

SHE



A Homage

*"Truly poor are those
who have no scars on their souls!"*

Andreas J. Voigt,
written in ideological imprisonment,
Bruchsal Fortress, autumn 1995

Translation into English by the author on 17 April 2025

The Longing

*"In the depths of my soul there is a warming darkness,
whose completeness resembles the impenetrable
incomprehensibility of infinity!"*

I am sitting here in my small, spartanly furnished cell. Another evening of loneliness dawns, and it gains access through the small opening in the high wall with rusty bars. I feel very old, at 28. My body is mercilessly imprisoned; innocently condemned. Guilty by conviction, for conscience is a standard that no one can or may escape.

I linger in thought—as I have so often in the past almost two years. The radio is on, but I can't hear the music, nor can I feel the chill of the gray and rainy season. My ambivalent feelings fluctuate once again: somewhere between longing and despair, between reason and bitterness.

Deep within a hidden part of my soul, a fire has been rekindled today. This mystical warmth spreads quickly. My body glows. My spirit is freed. It will never be imprisoned. It is the foundation of my sovereignty, my durability, and my strength. I will never be broken!

But what would this spirit be without its thoughts, its memories: the memory of her, only her. Yes, SHE, who gave me so much strength. SHE, though invisible and so far away, was alone capable of coaxing the small remnant of love and gentleness from the unapproachable depths.

Oh, Patricia, how often did you share the cruel days of imprisonment with me, giving me light in the darkness,

showing me the path to beauty amidst the ugliness. Beloved Patricia, how many evenings did you accompany me, giving me consolation when I was so soulless.

My angel, how many nights have we spent together on my small bedstead, both wrapped in the blue-checked prison blanket. You talked to me for hours, encouraging me in times of weakness. You fought my fleeting insecurities, held me fast, and banished my loneliness. You heavenly being, you godlike human—my Valkyrie. Your beautiful face, characterized by your Nordic features, always before me.

I look at the bare, empty wall, yet all I see are your beautiful, encouraging eyes. Their warm radiance fills me with fighting spirit, that vital source of strength that only you can give me.

What would you say if you knew the role you play in my current life? Would you understand my adventurous dreams—approve of them? I think so. I believe so. I must and want to believe it.

How long were we together, my love? Was it a year and a half or more like two years? I don't remember, but now it's been at least two additional years, because not a single day went by that I didn't think of you.

Would you have agreed? Well, you weren't here, not really. So I couldn't ask. But the memory of you was here. Distorted? Of course—but for your benefit, never mine. The few dark moments of our relationship have become relative to me. They simply don't exist. To even suspect them seems to me a true crime.

How long has it been, my darling? When did we meet? Has it been five or even six years? Oh, how benevolent and lovely this memory is. I'm closing my eyes now ...

The Encounter

"True love is like a savings account: you have to pay into it consistently and for a long time before you can live off the interest."

I was relaxing at home once more. As a paratrooper or *Fallschirmjäger* in the German Bundeswehr, I had recently been abroad again and was now on an extended home leave. Gaby had called and asked if she could come over. Why not, I said. I liked Gaby a lot. Our friendship was close, but limited to purely *intimate interaction*. We understood each other and got along well. Two young people, nonetheless mature, self-confident, and composed.

The doorbell rang! Gaby greeted me cheerfully. She introduced a surprise guest, her (unknown to me) friend:

"Good afternoon, Andreas."

"Good afternoon, Patricia."

Yes, SHE was gorgeous. Like Gaby, very tall, very slim, very blonde, but with long hair. Her blue eyes were deep, mysterious, challenging, yet vulnerable. That decidedly athletic figure! SHE moved with dignity, but cautiously.

We drank coffee, listened to music, and laughed. Oh, my gods, how I long for those days. Love at first sight? No. Sympathy? Yes. Was I charmed? Absolutely.

But I had so little time and no interest in a committed relationship. The first encounter almost turned out to be the last. Maybe it would have been better. So much love, so much pain, so much disappointment for her, whom I never wanted to hurt.

The martial arts enthusiast and well-experienced Patricia, impressed by my awards on the wall. We chatted about the subject. Such an intelligent and confident conversationalist—and a woman. Miracles still happen, I thought naively at the time.

A throwing board with shurikens hung on the wall. SHE took down a throwing star and hit the mark several times. A lamp stood beneath it. What had to happen happened. Was it fate, joss, karma, destiny? The throwing star hit the lamp, the lamp hit the floor, and Patricia seemed to be hit by a lightning bolt. Her facade, her protective wall, fell.

SHE turned to me, guiltily and remorseful. I was surprised, but not angry. Nevertheless, her gaze shocked me. I saw fear, uncertainty, and despair. I would have loved to take her in my arms and protect her from the evil in the world. The moment was over. SHE quickly recovered. SHE assured me SHE would replace the lamp. I nodded at her with a smile, but didn't think much more of it. However, SHE had managed to fascinate me.

The next day, SHE actually called. Relaxed, cheerful, meltingly sweet. SHE asked if I wanted to go downtown Stuttgart with her; SHE wanted to buy me a new lamp. Of course, I said, buoyantly, "Sure, I'll come with you."

It was one of the best days of my life. We walked through the stores, laughing, joking around like children. We even went to the lighting section of a department store, but who cared about a lamp anymore? Not us, anyway. We walked through the pedestrian zone. Were there people there, or was it deserted? I don't remember, because we only had eyes for each other. We walked through various shops. There are no lamps here. It didn't matter!

At some point, we held hands as if it were the most natural thing in the world: We were a couple, spiritually united. One against the world. Does such a thing really exist? Apparently. Thank the gods! Whether we bought a lamp, I can't remember for the life of me, just as I can't remember many details of the past—or don't want to remember.

We stayed together all day. In the evening, we went dancing with Gaby and friends. The disco was packed. The girls were whispering to each other. It wasn't hard to guess the topic, especially when I caught Patricia's affectionate glances.

I went onto the dance floor and danced alone. The lone wolf, as always. A rock ballad played. In the semidarkness, I noticed a small corridor forming in the crowd. Purposeful and determined, SHE came toward me. More than impressive in her little black dress. My body trembled with anticipation. SHE hesitated imperceptibly, unsure. I took a step toward her, raised my right hand—SHE slid into my arms and we embraced so tightly. The rhythm had become unimportant. We belonged together, and that we were. This familiarity, this unity, as if practiced for years.

As I write these lines, I am overcome by a flood of emotions that I am not able to convey accurately. I fear even Goethe would be incapable of doing so.

We drove to my home in silence. There was nothing to justify, nothing to discuss. Everything was clear between us, so natural, so right, as pure as her entire being was pure: not virginal, yet virtuous, untainted and honest, not calculating and corrupt.

Once we got to the apartment, we didn't want to break the spell. No lights, no music, no platitudes. Everything had been said. And then, inevitably, the moment came when desire overcame us ...

Oh my goodness! Now I sit here, years later, at the lowest point in my life. And yet, or perhaps precisely because of that, I so fondly remember those precious, enchanted moments when all problems and worries seemed far away and only the present and the two of us mattered.

The Yoke of Love

*"We are all but a product of our experiences
and live by the shadow of our memories!"*

There have been so many women in my life. All of them deserve that I occasionally uphold their legacy in my thoughts. Some of them I even loved:

- Sheila Gill, the gentle, married Englishwoman living in Stuttgart, who seduced, taught, loved and gifted the young German in 1986.
- Carol Henz, the German-American nurse from Illinois, who was a second sun during my vacation in Florida (1988) and showed me a devotion that was previously foreign to me.
- Elisabetta Tremolada, the beautiful model from Milan, the highlight of my vacation in Spain (1989). Her trips to Germany, mine to Italy, the sleepless nights so as not to waste a second. The ostracism of her family, whose attempt to marry us drove me away, and the disappointment in her light green eyes when I rejected the ultimatum.
- Anita Isaakson, the cool but stormy Viking who had turned my Norwegian nights into a recurring *midnight winter dream* during my two-month Bundeswehr deployment in Bardufoss and Narvik in the winter of 1990.
- Tatjana Prenn, who unleashed heaven and hell in me—my domination, her servitude. The stunning and enchanting Tati, whose desire for children was incompatible with my pursuit of pipe dreams.
- And so many more, whose names I sometimes—disgracefully—can't even remember. And yet SHE stands above them all—like a shining light in the dark of the common folk.

After our relationship ended, but not our love, there were always times when the thought of her dominated everything else. This fact caused me emotional pain for a long time. But now, during my time behind bars, this memory brings me

happiness. What would the last two years have been without this bliss? What a dreadful thought.

Being with Patricia was perfect. Yes, of course, there were ups and downs, but the good prevailed, and that's all that matters. I opened up to her; SHE didn't see or experience everything, but still more than anyone else. SHE was familiar with areas deep within me that no other person had ever reached. It became clear to me very quickly: This is the woman for life. Did SHE ever know or sense that? And if so, did SHE recognize my fear? The fear of the unknown, yet final?

Oh Patricia, my friend, my lover, and above all, my companion. SHE decided to align her life with mine, always hoping to keep me. SHE constrained me, took possession of my heart. I wasn't afraid of that. In the past, I have simply become disconnected, unemotional and controlling—both my strength and my weakness. What frightened me was the fact that I didn't want to resist. I wanted to give her what SHE gave me.

SHE was a risk, a challenge I had to face and overcome. I had lived dangerously for most of my adult life and was drawn to danger like a moth to a flame. Nothing in the world compares to the thrill you feel when you play the riskiest game and win. We could only be victorious together or go under.

How often had SHE expected a nod, a gesture, a hint from me? Did I love her as unconditionally as SHE loved me? Yes indeed, but SHE never knew that. Did I even know it back then? How often did I forbid her from touching me? Out of disgust or revulsion? Of course not, but out of fear! Out of fear of finally losing my self-command, of finally relinquish-

ing control of my feelings. I lost my courage, my personal overconfidence was exposed. SHE, the most wonderful woman in the world—for eternity, and I cast her out.

What agony must SHE have gone through, battling not only my arrogance, but also my senseless complacency and airs of dominance?! Did SHE ever realize during our relationship that SHE had misunderstood what was, in reality, genuine affection and deep concern? Did I even recognize it? But SHE never gave up. So brave, so proud—and so betrayed by me.

The Fateful Decision

*“Better dreamlike visions in darkness
than the bright, harsh reality!”*

It was a cool spring day when SHE called and gleefully told me about her day. I answered coolly and reservedly, a volcano inside, shaking with cramps. I felt so bad. I was nauseous. Today, over five years later, I feel this misery no less. I had made a decision. In the middle of the conversation, I told her: I'm breaking up. Only silence. A hideous, painful silence.

My voice failed me, but I had to take the initiative. If SHE cried, begged, pleaded, or even spoke at all, I would be lost and at her mercy forever—which would have been, as I know now, the contentment of my life. I heard a strange voice say goodbye forever, and I hung up the receiver with an unsteady hand. Did I speak? That can't be right, can it? Yes, it was you, Andreas, you complete idiot! What did I do? But there was no going back. Never!

Many weeks later, it was midsummer, I was sitting with my fellow crusaders outside a sidewalk café. A new girlfriend sat to my right; not love, just necessity. SHE came around the corner with a female companion and headed for the busy outdoor terrace. We caught sight of each other. SHE stopped dead. All the blood drained from her face. SHE staggered slightly, threatening to collapse. I was in danger of dying in my chair. I was unable to move. My heart exploded and was never fully mended. SHE was the first woman who had completely satisfied my deep-rooted need and search for genuine human closeness, for love, loyalty, and understanding—and I fear SHE will remain the only one.

SHE turned around, visibly swaying. SHE fled into the crowd of Stuttgart's pedestrian zone. I never saw her again ... never again.

Victory of Reason

"There is no shame in nursing the scars of past suffering and personal disappointment in old age, as long as one allows room for the healing feelings of a bright future."

SHE is now living her life, and I'm living mine. How often have I wondered, full of longing, how she is doing. Has SHE finished her law studies? Is SHE satisfied with her life? Is SHE happy? Has SHE found love, sanctuary, and self-esteem? I pray to the gods that it may be so.

Has SHE been able to overcome her hatred for me? Does SHE even think about me occasionally? At night, when SHE is

alone? Does SHE remember the beautiful, unforgettable moments, or is it part of my punishment that SHE doesn't?

The fact that my desire to love is manifesting itself with renewed intensity right now is further testimony to the dual extremity of my incomparable spirit, which has allowed me to maintain this shielding, healing world for the past two years. For this, I am grateful to the creators and to the memory of her.

But, as so often in my life, this era too will eventually end, and then a new future will dawn. The memory that gave me so much must give way. Reality is approaching, my release must gradually be prepared, but I will never release the memory of her. It will be locked away forever, in a place in my heart whose location only the gods and I know. And now, SHE knows it too. Here I will always keep her memory in loyalty and honor. Forever!

The Appeal

*"Even the shadows of the past
are inevitably a product of the light."*

Finally, I would like to say a few personal words to her, the SHE of my tale:

In the years after we had been together, I couldn't remember if I had ever told you how much I loved you, but I know that I loved you and that I always will, in my own way.

Many nights spent alone in a small, cold cell, I prayed that, if there were a higher power, you would hear me. The thought of you was a source of support, strength, and perseverance for me in times when I threatened to surrender internally.

The tears of my heart were proof that you were always with me and, symbolically, always will be. You protected me from drowning in the mystical swamp of hatred and vindictiveness.

For this, and so much more, I thank and salute you, Patricia! Farewell, farewell ...

The impetus for this tribute was a late-night radio show in which listeners were asked to write down and submit their "love stories." The first submission was read aloud by the host and touched me somehow. This, combined with a sentimental feeling, led me to want to record my own story in this way, though without ever submitting it anywhere.



Patricia (taekwondo full-contact black belt) and I in 1991 teaching close combat to German youth at the Paracelsus-Gymnasium in Hohenheim.

From "Patty" for "Andy":

Patty liebt Andy
 Andy liebt Patty
 Patricia liebt Andreas
 Andreas liebt Patricia
 Patricia Catherine liebt Andreas Jürgen
 Andreas Jürgen liebt Patricia Catherine
 Patricia Catherine Till liebt Andreas Jürgen Voigt
 Andreas Jürgen Voigt liebt Patricia Catherine Till

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*Omnia vincit amor,
 et nos cedamus amori!*